

Applying to Medical School: Assessing your application

William J. Higgins



Why are we here?

- Today, I plan to:
 - Review the application process
 - Examine & evaluate **YOUR** application
 - Review the MCAT and relevant information
 - Suggest a method of study
 - Assist you to establish a productive study schedule
 - Answer your questions

Disclaimer

No absolutes in this process, **but**
the data don't lie!

What % of applicants
matriculate?

43.5%

18,390 matriculants out of 42,269 applicants in 2009

Table 17: Applicants and Matriculants to
U.S. Medical Schools, 1996-2008

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
33,625	34,791	35,735	37,737	39,108	42,315	42,231
16,488	16,541	16,648	17,003	17,361	17,759	18,036

<http://www.aamc.org/data/facts/2008/2008mcatgpa.htm>

Overview of application process

You **MUST** identify the strengths and weaknesses
of your application before you begin!

Homework:

www.aamc.org/students/amca

S
American Medical College Application Service

www.aamc.org/students/mcat

Medical College Admission Test

<http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/msar.htm>

Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR®)

The most authoritative guide to all U.S. and Canadian medical schools just got better with a complete redesign and more information than ever before.

The MSAR is the #1 source for:

- Application procedures and deadlines
- Latest and most recent MCAT scores accepted
- Selection factors such as MCAT and GPA data
- Medical school class profiles
- Costs and financial aid packages
- M.D./Ph.D. and other combined degrees
- Graduate specialty choices
- Newly Accredited Medical Schools
 - The Commonwealth Medical College
 - Gallaudet University William Beaman School of Medicine
 - Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

MSAR® 2011-2012 Resources

The following resources can be helpful as you go through the application process. While not exhaustive, this list provides a comprehensive overview of information available to help you make a decision about a career in medicine.

Chapter One: So...You Want to Be A Doctor

[Careers in Medicine](#)

Chapter Two: Building a Strong Foundation: Your Undergraduate Years

Order the MSAR

Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR®) 2011-2012 is now available from AAMC Publications.

Interactive Resources

Medical School Assessment for Applicants (PDF)
Use this form to identify and assess schools of interest.

Medical School Requirements Progress Report for Applicants (PDF)
Use this form to track school specific application requirements and your progress.

The Medical School Information (PDF)
Use this form to brainstorm questions to ask during your interview.

Timeline for Application/Admission (PDF)
Use this as you prepare for the application process.

AMCAS - The American Medical College Application Service

The American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) is a nonprofit, centralized application processing service for applicants to the first-year entering classes at participating U.S. medical schools. For the 2011 entering class, most medical schools are participating in AMCAS.

AMCAS does not render any admission decisions and does not advise applicants where to apply. Each participating school is completely autonomous in making its admissions decisions. AMCAS provides only the application processing service. The AAMC and AMCAS neither endorse, nor have any relationship to, commercial counseling services concerned with admission to either U.S. or foreign medical schools.

Regardless of the number of AMCAS schools to which you apply, you submit just one application to AMCAS via the Web. You must also request an official transcript from each college of registration in the United States and Canada. AMCAS then assembles your application file, verifies it and forwards the application to your designated medical schools. AMCAS also sends your MCAT scores for tests taken since April 1981, provided you have released them to AMCAS.

Applicants to medical schools that do not participate in AMCAS, as well as all advanced standing and transfer applicants, should contact schools directly for application instructions. You should also contact schools directly for application information regarding joint or special programs, such as B.A./M.D., M.D./Ph.D., M.D./J.D., etc. [More about AMCAS vs.](#)

Related Resources

AAMC Recommendations for Medical School Admission Officers and Medical School Applicants
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service
Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR®)
Determine Medical School Application Service

Apply Now!
Start or continue your AMCAS 2011 application.
[AMCAS 2011 Logos](#)

AMCAS 2011 Instruction Book

FAQs
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Free Assistance Program
For AMCAS applicants and MCAT® examinees with extreme financial need.
[More vs.](#)

Criminal Background Checks
About the AAMC-Approved Background Check Service

AMCAS Letters
About the AMCAS Letters of Evaluation/Recommendation Service

AMCAS Letter Writer Application

Still Declined?

<http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas>

Overview of application process

- MCAT
 - Sign up dates
 - No 'practice' attempts!
- AMCAS
 - Began accepting ~ 1 June; submit ASAP !
- Your institution's pre-professional office
 - Letters
 - Transcripts & judicial clearance
- Secondary applications
- Interviews

A School's Selection Criteria from the MSAR

- Research
- Clinical experience
- Graduates' specialties
- Other factors



FACTS Home

Applicants and Matriculants

Enrollment, Graduates, and MD-PhD

FAQs Data

Directory

Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures

Home Government Affairs Newsroom Meetings Publications Shopping Cart Site Map Search

Applicants and Matriculants Data

By Institution

1. U.S. Medical School Applications and Matriculants by School, State of Legal Residence, and Sex, 2009

2. Undergraduate Institutions Sponsoring Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools, by Applicant Race and Ethnicity, 2009

By Legal Residence, Age, Sex

3. Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by State of Legal Residence, 1998-2009

4. Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by State of Legal Residence, 1998-2009

5. Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by Year of Medical School Matriculation Status, 2009

6. Age of Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools at Anticipated Matriculation by Sex and Race and Ethnicity, 2002-2009

7. Applicants, First-Time Applicants, Acceptances, and Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Sex, 1998-2009

By Race and Ethnicity

8. Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by Race, Selected Combinations within Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and Sex, 2009

9. Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Race, Selected Combinations within Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and Sex, 2009

10. Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Non-Hispanic or Latino Race, and State of Legal Residence, 2009

11. Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Non-Hispanic or Latino Race, and State of Legal Residence, 2009

12. Applicants, First-Time Applicants, Acceptances, and Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Non-Hispanic or Latino Race, and Sex, 2009-2009

13. Race and Ethnicity Responses of Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools, 2002-2009

14. Race and Ethnicity Responses (Open and In Combination) of Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools, 2002-2009

15. Race and Ethnicity (Open Race Response) of Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools, 2002-2009

16. Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by Race and Ethnicity, Selected Combinations, 2002-2009

Related

U.S. Medical School Applicants and Students (PDF) These charts include longitudinal data back to 1985.

For MCAT examinee data, see "MCAT Exam Statistics" on the Administration Officers and Pre-Health Advisors.

Contact FACTS

For additional data on medical school applicants, matriculants, enrollment, and graduates, please e-mail facts@aamc.org

Numerical Selection Criteria

Matriculants, 1998-2009		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
MCAT VR	Mean	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.7	9.7	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8
	SD	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.7
MCAT PS	Mean	9.9	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.9	9.9	10.0	10.1	10.3	10.3	10.3
	SD	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0
MCAT BS	Mean	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.3	10.4	10.5	10.6	10.7	10.8
	SD	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7
Total MCAT	Mean	29.6	29.7	29.7	29.6	29.6	29.6	29.9	30.2	30.3	30.8	30.9	30.8
	SD	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1
MCAT WS	Median	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	GPA science	Mean	3.52	3.53	3.54	3.54	3.55	3.56	3.56	3.57	3.59	3.60	3.60
GPA science	SD	0.37	0.36	0.35	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.33	0.33	0.32
	Mean	3.64	3.66	3.67	3.68	3.69	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.71	3.73	3.73	3.74
GPA non-science	SD	0.30	0.30	0.29	0.28	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	0.25
	Mean	3.57	3.59	3.60	3.60	3.61	3.62	3.62	3.63	3.64	3.65	3.66	3.66
GPA total	SD	0.35	0.30	0.30	0.29	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.26
	Total Matriculants	16,170	16,221	16,301	16,365	16,488	16,541	16,648	17,003	17,361	17,759	18,036	18,390

Selection Criteria

- GPA - overall and science
 - Strength of transcript
 - ALL grades reported
- MCAT scores
- Application essays
- Experience(s)
- Letters
- Interview
- State of residence

GPA for Applicants & Matriculants, 2009

	Applicants (42,269)	Matriculants (18,390)
GPA Science	3.41	3.60
GPA non-science	3.64	3.74
GPA Total	3.51	3.66

source: www.aamc.org/students/mcat

Applicant Facts

Median Grade Point Averages

GPA	2006		2007		2009	
	Applicants	Matriculants	Applicants	Matriculants	Applicants	Matriculants
BCPM	3.38	3.57	3.39	3.59	3.40	3.60
All Other	3.61	3.71	3.62	3.73	3.63	3.73
Cumulative	3.48	3.64	3.49	3.65	3.50	3.66

BCPM = Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math

All Other = all courses not classified as BCPM

Cumulative = all courses

Applicant Facts

2009 Applicants & Matriculants by Primary Undergraduate Major

Applicants 2006	Applicants	Matriculants
Biological Sciences	21,63	9,141
Humanities	2,041	1,020
Math and Statistics	389	177
Other	7,185	2,993
Physical Sciences	4,676	2,329
Social Sciences	5,110	2,215
Specialized Health Sciences	1,238	448
TOTAL	42,269	18,390

Selection Criteria

- GPA - overall and science
 - Strength of transcript
 - ALL grades reported
 - Repeated courses?
- MCAT scores
- Application essays
 - What do I tell the schools?
 - Are they really important?
- Experience
- Letters

Statistics, 2009

	Applicants	Matriculants
#	42,269	18,390
VR	9.0	9.8
PHYS 9.2		10.3
BIOL 9.8		
Writing	O	P

43.5%

Subject Averages 28.1 ↔ 30.9

<http://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/table18-facts09mcatgpbymaj1-web.pdf>

Applicant Facts

Average MCAT Scores

MCAT	2006		2007		2008	
	Applicants	Matriculants	Applicants	Matriculants	Applicants	Matriculants
Physical	9.1	10.1	9.2	10.3	9.3	10.3
Verbal	9.0	9.8	9	9.5	9.0	9.9
Writing	O	P	O	P	P	P
Biological	9.5	10.5	9.5	10.6	9.8	10.7

Table 24: MCAT and GPA Grid for Applicants and Acceptees to U.S. Medical Schools, 2007-2009 (aggregated)

The table below displays the acceptance rates at different MCAT and GPA levels for applicants and accepted applicants from 2007 to 2009. The frequencies are combined totals of all three years. Please email us at admissions@aaamc.org if you need further assistance or have additional inquiries.

GPA (GPA)	Acceptance rate for applicants, 2007-2009 (aggregated)	Total MCAT Scores										All
		5-14	15-17	18-19	20-21	22-23	24-25	26-27	28-29	30-31	32-33	
3.00-4.00	Applicants	5	9	81	287	1,371	3,330	5,640	6,584	3,777	1,134	18,702
	Applicants	76	177	319	1,447	3,160	5,406	6,437	5,773	4,770	1,485	37,483
	Acceptance rate %	6.5	5.1	25.4	19.9	43.3	61.6	87.6	90.0	79.1	76.4	51.6
3.50-3.75	Applicants	5	14	139	436	1,387	3,787	5,176	5,145	1,497	880	18,489
	Applicants	205	347	1,051	2,275	3,668	4,885	7,179	6,839	1,875	645	28,495
	Acceptance rate %	2.5	4.0	13.2	19.2	37.0	78.1	72.3	80.6	80.9	27.4	64.1
3.75-4.00	Applicants	9	14	128	421	1,581	2,547	3,448	2,106	540	179	10,762
	Applicants	370	535	1,194	1,877	4,707	6,709	8,245	5,951	1,242	220	28,373
	Acceptance rate %	2.4	2.6	10.7	22.4	33.6	38.0	41.8	35.0	43.5	11.1	37.6
3.25-3.50	Applicants	5	11	102	307	627	1,269	1,711	831	631	421	5,567
	Applicants	412	635	1,101	2,260	3,473	4,438	3,807	2,739	331	90	10,263
	Acceptance rate %	0.7	1.7	8.4	13.6	13.3	18.2	20.8	13.9	20.9	18.7	27.2
3.00-3.25	Applicants	3	15	37	177	303	741	1,000	320	125	18	2,546
	Applicants	480	629	957	1,429	2,108	2,468	1,504	861	226	40	11,763
	Acceptance rate %	0.4	2.4	3.9	12.4	14.4	30.1	26.5	37.1	55.3	45.0	18.2
2.75-3.00	Applicants	5	16	101	323	522	1,020	1,037	101	23	10	1,705
	Applicants	422	428	827	1,020	1,131	1,291	742	390	89	18	5,443
	Acceptance rate %	1.4	3.4	12.2	31.6	46.1	78.3	13.9	25.4	25.8	17.4	13.7
2.50-2.75	Applicants	5	10	41	76	81	195	195	19	7	5	270
	Applicants	270	115	333	723	552	489	1,037	143	40	8	1,907
	Acceptance rate %	1.5	1.8	7.8	10.9	11.8	18.8	18.2	18.7	17.9	13.3	9.2
2.25-2.50	Applicants	1	3	19	19	21	37	15	1	1	1	89
	Applicants	163	184	189	274	348	181	147	46	11	1	1,440
	Acceptance rate %	0.4	1.6	5.2	6.4	10.4	18.3	17.1	9.1	1.1	0.4	4.4
2.00-2.25	Applicants	1	2	7	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	100
	Applicants	185	81	119	89	97	87	89	17	8	1	689
	Acceptance rate %	0.2	1.8	5.8	3.4	4.8	4.8	4.8	3.8	14.7	1.1	3.4
1.75-2.00	Applicants	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Applicants	79	1	42	27	26	27	10	7	1	1	146
	Acceptance rate %	1.3	2.3	3.7	3.3	3.3	3.3	42.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	2.4
1.50-1.75	Applicants	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Applicants	23	21	18	14	1	1	1	1	1	1	105
	Acceptance rate %	4.3	4.8	4.8	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	2.3
All	Applicants	23	79	174	1,847	3,770	12,094	16,029	11,264	5,711	1,782	55,463
	Applicants	2,015	3,120	6,118	11,087	19,851	27,094	28,011	15,809	7,000	2,009	110,992
	Acceptance rate %	0.9	2.5	8.1	17.2	19.0	44.6	60.0	72.8	80.0	86.4	49.1

Source: AAMC Data Warehouse: Applicant Matriculant File, as of 4/1/2010. This data may be requested and delivered only via Request for Information (RFI) or approved RFI program only.

<http://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/table24-mcatgpa2007-09.pdf>

Applicant Facts

For more applicant data, go to:

<http://www.aamc.org/data/facts/start.htm>

Previous data and slides from:



[http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/advisors/
toolbox.htm](http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/advisors/toolbox.htm)

Range of MCAT scores
submitted by matriculants
“never” falls below an
8!

Why is the MCAT important to medical schools?



Selection Criteria

- GPA - overall and science
 - Strength of transcript
 - ALL grades reported
 - Repeated courses?
- MCAT scores
- Application essays
 - What do I tell the schools?
 - Are they really important?
- Experience
- Letters






According to AMCAS,
your personal statement,

- Attaches your personality to the rest of the application,
- Clarifies how you have prepared yourself for success in medical school,
- Explains why you want to pursue a career in medicine,
- Argues why you will make a good doctor.

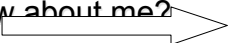




There are two questions you
must remember to address when
writing your personal statement.

What do the admissions folks
want to know about me?

What do I want the admissions
folks to know about me?





Why do I want to become a physician?

Why will I be a good physician?

Med School Admissions Articles, Advice, & Tips

Do's and Don'ts	Twenty succinct Do's and Don'ts for your AMCAS and non-AMCAS personal statements.
Secondary Essays	Make sure your secondary essays add value to your application.
10 Secrets of Good Writing	Discover the key elements to good writing and improve anything you have to put on paper.
Non-Science Background	Your non-science background can be a tremendous advantage. Guarantee that it is by answering the 3 critical questions raised in this article.
Research Background	Take advantage of your strong science background and show that you are a well-rounded human being.
Older Applicants	Learn how to profit from your maturity while making sure you answer the unasked questions about older applicants.
Letters of Rec	Ten tips for writers of letters of recommendation.
Residency Essays	Four essential elements of an outstanding residency essay.

<http://www.accepted.com/medical/AmcasEssay.aspx>

Personal Statements: The Do's:

- 1.Unite your essay and give it direction with a theme or thesis. The thesis is the main point you want to communicate.
- 2.Before you begin writing, choose what you want to discuss and the order in which you want to discuss it.
- 3.Use concrete examples from your life experience to support your thesis and distinguish yourself from other applicants.
- 4.Write about what interests you, excites you. That's what the admissions staff wants to read.
- 5.Start your essay with an attention-grabbing lead--an anecdote, quote, question, or engaging description of a scene.

<http://www.accepted.com/medical/dosdents.aspx>

Personal Statements: The Do's:

6. End your essay with a conclusion that refers back to the lead and restates your thesis.
7. Revise your essay at least three times.
8. In addition to your editing, ask someone else to critique your personal statement.
9. Proofread your personal statement by reading it out loud or reading it into a tape recorder and playing back the tape.
10. Write clearly, succinctly.

<http://www.accepted.com/medical/dosdents.aspx>

The Don't's

1. Don't include information that doesn't support your thesis.
2. Don't start your essay with "I was born in..." or "My parents came from..."
3. Don't write an autobiography, itinerary, or resume in prose.
4. Don't try to be a clown (but gentle humor is OK).
5. Don't be afraid to start over if the essay just isn't working or doesn't answer the essay question.

<http://www.accepted.com/medical/dosdents.aspx>

The Don't's

- 6. Don't try to impress your reader with your vocabulary.
- 7. Don't rely exclusively on your computer to check your spelling.
- 8. Don't provide a collection of generic statements and platitudes.
- 9. Don't give mealy-mouthed, weak excuses for your GPA or test scores.
- 10. Don't make things up.

<http://www.accepted.com/medical/dosdents.aspx>

Edit your essay:

- Subject verb agreement
- Active voice verbs
- Definite verbs
- Avoid empty killer phrases
 - "It is" or "I want to be able to practice medicine.."
- Limit your use of "passion"
- Read it aloud!
- Outline it when you are finished



Selection Criteria

- GPA - overall and science
 - Strength of transcript
 - ALL grades reported
 - Repeated courses?
- MCAT scores
- Application essays
 - What do I tell the schools?
 - Are they really important?
- Experience
- Letters

A word about recommendation letters.....

Experience and Interests

Never underestimate the importance of your college pre-professional committee letter

Selection Criteria

- GPA - overall and science
 - Strength of transcript
 - ALL grades reported
- MCAT scores
- Application
- Letters
- Experience
- Essays
- State of residence
- Interview

Preparing for your interview: Do your homework!

- Tie your shoes
- Know the program!
- Two lists of questions
- Know the Admissions staff members
- Review everything the you submitted
- Be familiar with the problems or issues facing the medical profession
- Personalize your conversation
- Be yourself and SMILE!!!



Is age a factor?

Early Decision?

Addressing weak sections of your application:

- GPA - overall and science
 - Take REAL, upper division, graded science courses!
- MCAT scores
 - Read, read, read, and read
 - Practice tests (timed!) before study!
- Application essays
 - Get help and prepare 4 - 5 drafts over 2 weeks
 - Read it aloud!
- Submit AMCAS on time!

Addressing weak sections of your application:

- Experience
 - Patient contact in a clinical setting
 - Research (look at MSAR)
- Letters
 - Rethink your assets
- Interview
 - Practice, public speaking courses/opportunities
 - Read more!
- State of residence and choice of schools

One year post bac programs?

Put July ?? on your calendar!

The role of your research
experiences in your application?

How many schools?

The MCAT

What is it?

The screenshot shows the MCAT website with several annotations. A blue circle highlights the 'MCAT Home' link in the left sidebar. Another blue circle highlights the 'MCAT Updates' section in the main content area, which includes information about registration for the January-May 2019 MCAT Exam. A third blue circle highlights the 'MCAT Essentials (PDF)' link in the 'MCAT Updates' section. The website header includes the AAMC logo and navigation links like 'MCAT', 'AMCAS', 'ERAS', 'NMP', 'Publications', and 'More Resources'. The main content area is titled 'Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)' and includes sections for 'Preparing for the Exam', 'Reserving a Seat', and 'Taking the Exam'.

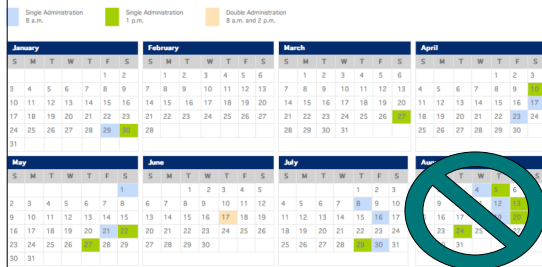
Your MCAT Day

Test Section	Questions	Time
Tutorial (optional)		10 minutes
Examinee Agreement		10 minutes
Physical Sciences	52	70 minutes
Break (optional)		10 minutes
Verbal Reasoning	40	60 minutes
Break (optional)		10 minutes
Writing Sample	2	60 minutes
Break (optional)		10 minutes
Biological Sciences	52	70 minutes
Void Question		5 minutes
Survey (optional)	12	10 minutes
Total Content Time		4 hours, 25 minutes
Total "Seat" Time		5 hours, 25 minutes
Total time does not include check-in time on arrival at the test center.		

The MCAT

When?

2010 MCAT Exam Schedule for the United States and Canada



2010 Registration Deadline and Score Release Schedule				
Test Date	Registration Opens	Regular Registration Closes** 11:59 p.m. ET	Late Registration Closes** 11:59 p.m. ET	Tentative Score Release Date After 5 p.m. ET
Friday, January 29	November 2, 2009	January 15, 2010	January 22, 2010	March 2, 2010
Saturday, January 30	November 2	January 16	January 23	March 2
Saturday, March 27	November 2	March 13	March 20	April 27
Saturday, April 10	November 2	March 27	April 3	May 11
Saturday, April 17	November 2	April 3	April 10	May 18
Friday, April 23	November 2	April 9	April 16	May 25
Saturday, May 1	November 2	April 17	April 24	June 1
Friday, May 21	November 2	May 7	May 14	June 22
Saturday, May 22	November 2	May 8	May 15	June 22
Thursday, May 27	November 2	May 13	May 20	June 29
Thursday, June 17	Spring 2010, date TBA	June 3	June 10	July 20
Thursday, July 8	Spring 2010, date TBA	June 24	July 1	August 10
Friday, July 16	Spring 2010, date TBA	July 2	July 9	August 17
Thursday, July 29	Spring 2010, date TBA	July 15	July 22	August 31
Friday, July 30	Spring 2010, date TBA	July 16	July 23	August 31
Wednesday, August 4	Spring 2010, date TBA	July 21	July 28	September 7
Thursday, August 5	Spring 2010, date TBA	July 22	July 29	September 7
Thursday, August 12	Spring 2010, date TBA	July 29	August 5	September 14

Schools accepting September
MCATs ?

The MCAT

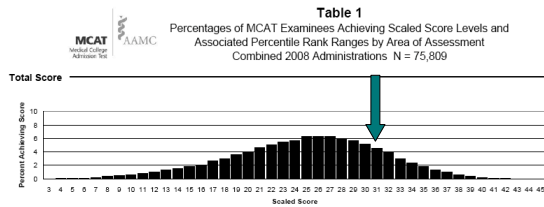
How well must I do?
How to do well?

The MCAT

- Biological Sciences (1 - 15)
- Physical Sciences (1 - 15)
- Verbal Reasoning (1 - 15)
- Writing Sample (J - T)

Note: these scores are scaled, not absolute.

MCAT Data: 2008 Combined



Scaled Score	Percent Achieving Score	Percentile Rank Range
45	0.0	99.9-99.9
44	0.0	99.9-99.9
43	0.0	99.9-99.9
42	0.1	99.9-99.9
41	0.1	99.7-99.8
40	0.2	99.5-99.6
39	0.4	99.2-99.4
38	0.7	98.5-99.1
37	1.0	97.6-98.4
36	1.3	96.2-97.5
35	1.9	94.4-96.1
34	2.4	92.0-94.3
33	2.9	89.0-91.9
32	3.9	85.1-88.9
31	4.6	80.5-85.0
30	5.2	75.3-80.4
29	5.7	69.6-75.2
28	5.9	63.7-69.5
27	6.3	57.3-63.6
26	6.3	51.0-57.2

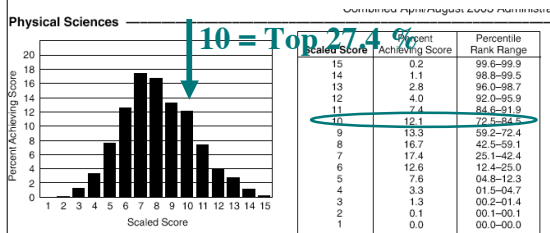
Scaled Score
Mean = 24.9
Std Deviation = 6.4

source: www.aamc.org/students/mcat

Example: Physical Sciences

- 52 Total Questions in 70 minutes
- 42 related to passages
 - ~250 words in each of 7 - 9 passages
- 10 questions unrelated to each other or to the passages
- ~42,000 test takers earning scores of 1 - 15

Scaled Scores



source: www.aamc.org/students/mcat

Question:

How many questions
(out of 52 total) separate
a score of 10 from a 9 or
an 11 ?

Creating a Study Plan

While there is no one way to prepare for the MCAT, your study plan should begin at least three months before your chosen exam date. Here's an outline you might want to revise to fit your situation:

- Obtain a copy of [The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam](#)
- Read and understand the [MCAT Essentials](#) (PDF)
- Read "Preparing for the Test Sections" (see sidebar).
- Make a note of any material that is unfamiliar to you or that you haven't studied recently.
- Review the science topics using relevant course materials, including textbooks, course outlines, and notes.
- Work through MCAT practice tests, using the diagnostic reports in the online practice tests to identify topics and skills that need additional review.
- If your pace on the practice tests is slow, take advantage of any services your college offers to help improve reading speed and comprehension.
- If you have a study partner, each of you can use your strengths to help the other address areas of weakness.
- Avoid last-minute "cramming."
- Make sure to get enough sleep, food, and exercise, especially in the days preceding the test.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I take the MCAT exam?

Medical school admissions officers usually suggest that you take the test in the calendar year prior to the year in which you plan to enter medical school. They generally recommend a spring testing date because receipt of the Spring scores allows for summer or early fall completion of your application. A spring test date is also recommended because it permits examinees who feel that their scores do not accurately reflect their abilities to retake in the Summer or Fall. Later scores may then be submitted to medical schools in the same application year as the earlier scores.

Preparing for the Test Sections

Multiple Choice Sections: Content Outlines

- [Physical Sciences](#) (PDF)
- [Verbal Reasoning](#) (PDF)
- [Biological Sciences](#) (PDF)

Multiple Choice Sections: How to Prepare

- [Physical Sciences](#)
- [Verbal Reasoning](#)
- [Biological Sciences](#)

Writing Sample

- [Sample Prompts](#)
- [How to Prepare](#)

Topics for Biological Sciences Section of the MCAT

Biology

Molecular Biology: Enzymes and Metabolism

A. ENZYME STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

1. Function of enzymes in catalyzing biological reactions
2. Reduction of activation energy
3. Substrates and enzyme specificity

B. CONTROL OF ENZYME ACTIVITY

1. Feedback inhibition
2. Competitive inhibition
3. Non-competitive inhibition

C. BASIC METABOLISM

1. Glycolysis, anaerobic and aerobic, substrates and products
2. Krebs cycle, substrates and products, general features of the pathway
3. Electron transport chain and oxidative phosphorylation, substrates and products, general features of the pathway
4. Metabolism of fats and proteins

Oxygen Containing Compounds

A. ALCOHOLS

1. Description
 - a. nomenclature
 - b. physical properties
 - c. infrared absorption of OH group
2. Important reactions
 - a. substitution reactions: S_N1 or S_N2 , depending on alcohol and derived alkyl halide
 - b. oxidation
 - c. pinacol rearrangement in polyhydroxyalcohols; synthetic uses
 - d. protection of alcohols
 - e. reactions with $SOCl_2$ and PBr_3
 - f. preparation of mesylates and tosylates
 - g. esterification
 - h. inorganic esters
3. General principles
 - a. hydrogen bonding
 - b. acidity of alcohols compared to other classes of oxygen-containing compounds
 - c. effect of chain branching on physical properties

Physics

Translational Motion



1. Units and dimensions
2. Vectors, components
3. Vector addition
4. Speed, velocity (average and instantaneous)
5. Acceleration
6. Freely falling bodies

Force and Motion, Gravitation

1. Center of mass
2. Newton's first law, inertia
3. Newton's second law ($F = ma$)
4. Newton's third law, forces equal and opposite
5. Concept of a field
6. Law of gravitation ($F = K_G m_1 m_2 / r^2$)
7. Uniform circular motion
8. Centripetal acceleration ($F = mv^2/r$)
9. Weight
10. Friction, static and kinetic
11. Motion on an inclined plane
12. Analysis of pulley systems
13. Force

Things to remember about MCAT Preparation

1. You are studying to get a score, not learn tons of material.
2. You do not need to know the enzymes of the Krebs Cycle.
3. You only need to know a relatively small number of facts.
4. Content study yields diminishing returns. Practice pays larger dividends.



Publications

The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam

March 2009, 400 Pages

This new guidebook, developed under the direction of the MCAT staff, provides you with extensive information on "everything MCAT." Focus groups conducted among medical school applicants and current medical students helped determine the content, which includes:

- Passages and questions from actual MCAT exams, with detailed explanations of both the correct and incorrect answers
- Tips to help you come up with the right solutions
- "Difficulty levels" of questions, revealing what percentages of examinees answered correctly in the real-life tests
- Data to help you determine how likely you are to increase or decrease your score upon a retake, and by how many points
- Data that show what percentage of applicants were admitted to medical school, based on MCAT scores and GPAs combined
- A look at how MCAT scores factor into the admissions decision, with insights from a former associate dean of admissions

In addition, you may upgrade your purchase of the guide for an additional \$15, which will provide you with access to an official AAMC practice test of your choice (a \$35 value).

	ID	Price	
Member/Non-Member	MCATGUIDE	\$30.00	Add to cart
MCAT Guide with One Practice Test	MCATGUIDE	\$45.00	Add to cart

[Am I a member?](#)

Related Publications

- MCAT Computer-Based Web Practice Test 10 (Web)
- MCAT Computer-Based Web Practice Test 3 - Special QBT MCAT Practice Online Offer (Web)
- MCAT Computer-Based Web Practice Test 4 (Web)
- MCAT Computer-Based Web Practice Test 5 (Web)
- MCAT Computer-Based Web Practice Test 6 (Web)
- MCAT Computer-Based Web Practice Test 7 (Web)
- MCAT Computer-Based Web Practice Test 8 (Web)
- MCAT Computer-Based Web Practice Test 9 (Web)
- Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) 2010-2011 (Book)

Writing sample

1. Developing a central idea
2. Synthesizing concepts and ideas
3. Presenting ideas cohesively and logically
4. Writing clearly using good grammar, syntax and punctuation consistent with a timed, first draft

Writing sample

You are given a statement expressing an opinion.

First, explain what you think this means.

Second, explore the meaning by considering a circumstance in which the statement might not apply or be true.

Third, discuss ways in which the conflict might be resolved.

Writing Sample

- Two scores for each of two sections
 - Each evaluator awards a score of 1 to 6
- Sum of scores on two questions is converted to J to T scale (11 units on scores from 4 - 24)
- For example:
 - 3 & 3 on Part 1 and 5 & 6 on Part 2
 - Raw score of 17 converted to alphabetic to give distribution

So how do I begin to study?

1. Download Content!
2. Set up study schedule
3. Analyze Practice Tests
4. Textbooks !!!
5. Sample problems !!!

The most beneficial, helpful, and useful thing you can do to prepare.....

Take practice tests under **game** conditions!

Practice MCATs at

- www.e-mcat.com
 - Online
- www.aamc.org
 - Online and paper for sale
- Sample questions in PDF manual
- Helpful site:
<http://silenttimer.com/handbook/standardizedtest/mcat/index.php>

Higgins's Recipe for
MCAT Study
on the OITE Web site



Do I need a review course ?

What is the value of review course material?

Study groups or solo?

When do you finally learn and understand something ?

When are you sure ?

Homework

- Download & read MCAT info from Web
 - at least *MCAT Essentials* !
- Examine data & determine desired state of residence
- Identify potential letter writers
- Begin to identify times and places in your schedule
- What do you need to study?

To schedule an appointment:

On line appointment system:

https://www.training.nih.gov/career_services/appointments

**Other Workshops on OITE
website:**

[Preparing for the MCATs](#)

On line previous workshops:

[Writing your personal statement](#)

[Filling out the AMCAS forms](#)
